Telephone Connections in Post Offices of Meghalaya

1243. SHRI ONWARD L. NONGTDU: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS be pleased to state:

(a) whether telephone connection have been provided in all the post offices of Meghalaya;

(b) if so, the number of post offices yet to be provided with this facility; and

(c) by when this facility is likely to be provided to such post offices in the State during the Ninth Five Year Plan?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS (SHRI TAPAN SIKDAR): (a) and (b) No, Sir. In Meghalaya out of 480 Post Offices including extra-departmental Sub & Branch Post Offices, 54 Post Offices including extra-departmental Post Offices have telephone facilities leaving 426 post offices without telephone facilities.

(c) Attempts are being made by the Telecom authorities to provide telephone on demand by the end of Ninth Plan. Telephone connections are provided to Post Offices on the demand placed subject to availability of resources.

Corruption in MTNL Directory Printing

1244. SHRI SATISCHANDRA SITARAM PRADHAN: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government's attention has been drawn to the news-item published in Sakal, Marathi daily, Mumbai dated 3rd November, 1999 under the caption "Corruption in MTNL directory printing";

(b) if so, the details; and

(c) the action proposed to be taken by Government in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS (SHRI TAPAN SIKDAR): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) The General Secretary, Mumbai North-West Congress Committee has alleged that there is corruption in printing of supplementary telephone directory. It was alleged that only 5-6 lakhs copies of supplementary directory are printed in place of required 22

lakh copies. The supplementary directories are distributed through 3-4 courier companies on contract basis. These courier companies distribute only 5-6 lakh directories and give bogus acknowledgements of distributing directories to all the 22 lakh subscribers in Mumbai. Every six months few telephone numbers change but in the supplementary directory lot of information which is not required, is also printed to increase the cost from Rs. 12/- to Rs. 20/-.

(c) The investigation was carried out and preliminary investigation does not reveal any irregularity.

Capacity of Telephone Exchanges in Assam

1245. SHRIMATI BASANTI SARMA: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS be pleased to state:

(a) the present capacity of the telephone exchanges in the State of Assam;

(b) the number of phones presently out of order in Assam during the last one year;

(c) the waiting list for phones in Assam presently; and

(d) by when this waiting list is likely to be cleared?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS (SHRI TAPAN SIKDAR): (a) As on 31.10.99, total switching capacity of telephone exchanges in the State of Assam is 2,96,371.

(b) On an average, 1000 telephones per day are reported to be faulty. Most of them are repaired expeditiously as per departmental norms.

(c) As on 31.10.99, 25211 persons are on waiting list for new telephone connection in Assam.

(d) The waiting list is likely to be wiped out by the year 2000.